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MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

THE 2006 HEZBOLLAH-ISRAELI WAR: ISRAEL'S GRENADA

SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF MILITARY STUDIES

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Executive Summary

Title: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War: Israel's Grenada

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Thesis: The Effects Based Operations inspired doctrine created by the Israeli Defense Forces led to their failure in the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War because it is a fundamentally flawed concept and it enabled Hezbollah to prepare for an effects based operations campaign.

Discussion: From July 12, 2006 until August 14, 2006, Israel launched a war into Lebanon to fight Hezbollah in retaliation for a Hezbollah attack on Israel. The Israeli military embraced a new doctrine before the war that relied on Effects Based Operations, Systemic Operational Design, and precision munitions at the expense of ground maneuver forces. Israel's overreliance on their Effects Based Operations concept was one of the primary factors that led to their defeat. Effects Based Operations originated in the U.S. Air Force in the 1990s where it gradually gained joint and international recognition. In the United States, the Effects Based Operations prepared the way for ground maneuver forces, but Israel used ground maneuver forces as a last resort. Hezbollah successfully predicted the Israeli strategy and prepared to defeat them. The Systemic Operational Design language and methodology created problems as well, because it seemed nearly incomprehensible to those charged with its implementation. The Israeli airpower was unable to destroy or inflict serious casualties on Hezbollah and Hezbollah was able to continuously shoot rockets into Israel. When Israel launched a ground campaign into Lebanon, their army was unprepared and they fought a well-prepared and determined enemy.

Conclusion: The Effects Based Operations-inspired doctrine that the Israeli Defense Forces adopted relied too much on airpower and relied too little on ground maneuver forces. Hezbollah was able to predict how Israel would fight and they neutralized Israel's airpower by creating hidden fortified bunkers, and stockpiling weapons and supplies. Israel's inability to beat Hezbollah with airpower forced Israel to launch a ground invasion into Lebanon where Hezbollah was prepared to fight them on equal terms. The Israeli military was unable to create a decisive military or political victory against Hezbollah, and Hezbollah would subsequently claim a strategic victory.

Preface

My interest in studying the 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli war grew because I wanted a better understanding of how a non-state actor could win a strategic victory against a nation-state. The United States will likely fight a non-state actor in a future conflict. Understanding how both sides fought in the 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli war provides valuable lessons that the United States military planners can use to prepare for future conflicts.

In completing my research and writing this paper, I wish to acknowledge the support of my Marine Corps University mentor, Dr. Francis H. Marlo. Throughout this process, he has provided me with excellent advice and I have benefitted from his wise counsel and guidance. I would also like to recognize the support of my Operational Art instructor, Dr. Paul D. Gelpi, who has challenged me throughout the academic year and who has provided me with a tremendous amount of assistance in completing this paper. Most importantly, I would like to thank my wife Stephanie for her love and support that made this accomplishment possible.

On July 12, 2006, Hezbollah ambushed an Israeli patrol inside Israel and kidnapped two soldiers. The kidnapping started a war between Hezbollah and Israel that would last until a United Nations cease-fire went into effect on August 14, 2006. The performance of the Israeli military during the war was highly criticized. Many critics blamed the poor performance on the Israeli Effects Based Operations doctrine that the Israeli military adopted before the war.¹ However, other factors led to their failure as well. In the years leading up to the war, Israel created a new military doctrine that embraced the theory of Effects Based Operations that also incorporated Systemic Operational Design and precision firepower.

The U.S. Air Force created the concept of Effects Based Operations in the 1990s. The intent of Effects Based Operations was to look at an enemy as a system and seek to determine the root effects that would achieve desired military ends. Using the advantages of technology (specifically airpower), Effects Based Operations sought the most efficient ways to achieve those ends, and called for parallel kinetic and non-kinetic attacks against key nodes within that system, disabling it and paralyzing the enemy's ability to react.² Proponents of Effects Based Operations proposed that it had the potential to reduce the force requirements, casualties, duration of conflict, forward basing, and deployment of forces previously required to prevail in war.³

Effects Based Operations proponents within the IDF came to believe that precision air attacks against critical military systems could completely immobilize an enemy. The Israeli supporters of Effects Based Operations also hypothesized that little or no land forces would be required since it would not be required to destroy the enemy.⁴ However, this interpretation of Effects Based Operations is seriously flawed. The United States used Effects Based Operations as part of a joint force that often used airpower to prepare the way for ground maneuver forces.

An Israeli Air Force campaign planner stated “the Americans used EBO to prepare the way for their ground maneuvers, and not as an alternate to them.”⁵ Israel also failed to grasp how a non-state actor like Hezbollah could counter a precision fires only approach by dispersing its forces and creating a decentralized command and control system. Clearly, the Israeli’s flawed understanding of the Effects Based Operations concept is not a reason to criticize Effects Based Operations.

Systemic Operational Design originated in Israel during the mid-1990s when the Israeli chief of defense staff created the Operational Theory Research Institute (OTRI). Brigadier Generals Shimon Naveh and Dov Tamari were the founders and co-directors of OTRIO until the spring of 2006. In their view, the IDF was in a deep crisis because of a lack of knowledge and understanding of operational thinking. Naveh and his supporters embraced systems theory as the way to understand and affect the country’s operational environment. The work done by Naveh and his colleagues at OTRI resulted in Systemic Operational Design.⁶

Leading advocates of Systemic Operational Design explain it as a method that uses critical learning of a shared appreciation of systemic logic to form hypotheses relevant to unique and highly complex situations that evade easy or commonsense solutions.⁷ Systemic Operational Design attempted to provide commanders with the aptitude necessary to think critically, systemically, and methodically about war fighting. The design focused on the concept of the enemy and provided operational commanders with tools to conceptualize both their enemies and themselves to design suitable campaigns.⁸

Systemic Operational Design is separate from operational planning because supposedly there are major “cognitive” differences between them. In the view of Systemic Operational Design proponents, operational design deals with learning, while planning is about action. In a

traditional operational planning process, design is not separate from the planning process. The vocabulary used by Systemic Operational Design advocates is essentially unintelligible to individuals who are not well versed in this theory. The vocabulary originated from French postmodern philosophy, literary theory, architecture, and psychology. Not every IDF officer would have the time or inclination to study the new terminology.⁹ Separating design from the planning process, along with creating two distinct sets of terminology, would inevitably cause problems due to misunderstandings. It was also questionable whether the majority of IDF officers could grasp a design that Naveh proclaimed was “not intended for ordinary mortals.”¹⁰ Many IDF officers did not understand why a design that few could understand replaced the old system of simple orders and terminology.¹¹

Israel’s new focus on precision firepower was a departure from its previous doctrine. In the past, Israel had sought the best weapons systems to ensure they had the technical edge over their enemies, but they understood the danger of over reliance on technology. The new operational doctrine was unlike the traditional one because it was heavily technology orientated. Stressing the ascendancy of firepower over maneuver, it focused on achieving battlefield success via a combination of accurate precision fires, standoff fire and limited operations on the ground, the need to affect the enemy’s consciousness, and the diminishing role of large-scale ground maneuvers.¹²

The Israeli Defense Forces’ Effects Based Operations-inspired doctrine, that vigorously embraced air power at the expense of ground maneuver forces, would seriously degrade their military’s fighting capabilities. Hezbollah was able to correctly predict that Israel would rely on airpower in any future conflict and changed its own tactics to counter Israel’s strengths and exploit their weaknesses. The Effects Based Operations inspired doctrine created by the Israeli

Defense Forces led to their failure in the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War because it was a fundamentally flawed concept and it enabled Hezbollah to prepare for an effects based operation campaign.

In the years leading to the Israel-Hezbollah 2006 War, Israel created a new doctrine that would make profound changes in how the Israeli military trained and conducted military operations. The Israeli Effects Based Operations doctrine would emphasize the use of airpower and minimize the role of ground maneuver forces.¹³ The Israeli Effects Based Operations-inspired doctrine would lead to Israel's failure in the Israeli-Hezbollah 2006 War because it was fundamentally flawed concept that over emphasized air power, minimized the role of ground maneuver forces, and could not produce the desired "effects" on Hezbollah.

The Israeli Defense Forces had developed two contingency plans to use against Hezbollah years before the hostilities of July 12. The first was SHOVERET HAKERACH that called for an air campaign against Hezbollah that would last for 48 to 72 hours. The second operation was MEY MAROM and it called for a ground invasion. Once SHOVERET HAKERACH commenced, the Israeli Defense Forces would call and deploy the reserves for MEY MAROM. After 48 to 72 hours of the air campaign, the ground campaign would commence if the hostilities had not ended.¹⁴

When it came time to implement these contingency plans after the hostilities of July 12, the Chief of the Israeli Defense Forces General Staff Dan Halutz opted for a stand-alone air campaign. His plan was to produce "effects" that would force Hezbollah out of southern Lebanon and cause them to disarm, rather than directly or fully crushing Hezbollah's capabilities. Halutz proposed an immense air strike against "symbolic" Lebanese targets and Hezbollah's military resources and leadership. He believed that hitting all these targets would

collapse Hezbollah as a military organization.¹⁵ The Israelis allegedly told Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, “You did it in about 70 days [in Kosovo], but we need half of that—35 days.”¹⁶ Hezbollah, however, had prepared for an effects based campaign, and the Lebanese government was too weak and incapable of challenging Hezbollah.¹⁷ The use of ground maneuver forces would be a last resort under Halutz’s plan.

The Israeli Air Force flew roughly 15,000 sorties and attacked about 7,000 targets during the war. Nevertheless, airpower not only failed to prevent the delivery of some 4,000 Hezbollah rockets against targets in northern Israel—the most visible Hezbollah threat and one of the greatest immediate concern to the Israeli people—but also failed to exercise the coercive effect on the Lebanese government.¹⁸

Israel used its airpower to attack bridges and transportation targets to prevent the movement and export of the Israeli prisoners out of the country, to stem the flow of arms and military arms to Hezbollah from Syria, and to interdict or prevent the movement of Hezbollah arms and forces. Israel was successful in destroying the bridges and transportations networks, but Hezbollah had no particular need to resupply or reinforce its fighters. Sufficient weapons and munitions had been pre-positioned in the south to reduce the requirement for dangerous resupply over distances.¹⁹ Although the Israeli attacks against the bridges and transportation targets were successful, it did not produce the desired effects because Hezbollah had anticipated these events and had prepositioned stockpiles of supplies.

On the night of 12 July, Israeli jets and artillery began limited attacks on infrastructure targets across Lebanon, Hezbollah’s rockets, command and control centers, and Al-Manar television. An Israeli Air Force squadron flying near Beirut attacked and destroyed 54 of Hezbollah’s long-range rockets.²⁰ When Halutz learned of the mission’s success, he informed

Israeli Prime Minister Yossi Olmert by secure phone that, “all the long range rockets have been destroyed. We’ve won the war.”²¹ The declaration of victory was premature. Hezbollah spread its arsenal of short-range rockets throughout southern Lebanon and it would be impossible to find and destroy them all.

Israel continued to launch air and artillery attacks on Lebanon and Hezbollah. Hezbollah responded with a steady stream of rocket attacks on northern Israel. As early as 14 July, Israeli intelligence suggested to high ranking military and political leaders that air power alone could not accomplish the mission. The intelligence “concluded that the heavy bombing campaign and small ground offensive [small IDF special forces incursions] then underway would show ‘diminishing returns’ within days.”²² It stated that the plan would neither win the release of the two Israeli soldiers in Hezbollah’s hands nor reduce the militia’s rocket attack on Israel to fewer than 100 a day. A US official who closely monitored the war speculated that the IAF air strikes only destroyed 7% of Hezbollah’s military resources.²³

The office of Lebanese Prime Minister Fouad Siniora issued a statement on 14 July calling for a comprehensive ceasefire. The next day, Siniora called for an immediate ceasefire backed by the United Nations in a televised speech. However, the United Nations Security Council rejected the Lebanese request for a ceasefire. It may have been possible to end the war at this time if the Israeli politicians had accepted this offer. A ceasefire may have enabled the Israeli politicians to negotiate and achieve their objectives without continuing the conflict.

During the first 10 days of fighting, the IAF had used most of its high-tech munitions. Israel requested an emergency supply of precision guided missiles from the United States. The huge expenditure of weaponry did little to change Hezbollah’s “military logic” or its fighting capability.²⁴ The press was leaked information indicating, “Hezbollah had not suffered a

significant degradation in its military capabilities, and that the organization might be able to carry on the conflict for several months.”²⁵ The airpower had failed to stop the rocket attacks and it became clear that more ground maneuver elements would need to become involved. However, the Effects Based Operations doctrine seriously diminished the Israeli ground force capabilities in the years leading up to the war.

Some Israeli politicians and IDF officers were skeptical of Halutz’ campaign plan, but he did not effectively address or present their doubts to Israeli Prime Minister Yossi Olmert or Defense Minister Amir Peretz. Furthermore, he did not adequately address the fact that the military’s own assessment indicated the likelihood that ground operations would be necessary.²⁶ Halutz suggested in 2001 that the IDF needed “to part with the concept of land battle” altogether. Not surprisingly, the new doctrine he had endorsed relied heavily on precision firepower at the expense of ground maneuver forces.²⁷

Israel made plans to conduct an effects based ground campaign as it became clear that the effects based air campaign was not working. The effects base ground campaign allowed the regular army to make limited battalion and brigade sized raids into Lebanon. However, these raids did not destroy Hezbollah or its rockets. The purpose of the raids was to create a “consciousness of victory” for the Israelis and a “cognitive perception of defeat” for Hezbollah. It became obvious to many in the IDF that the plan would not work. The air campaign could not destroy the Hezbollah rockets and the ground-based raids would have little effect. One Israeli officer commented, “That didn’t make any sense at all. You either activate MEY MAROM [and] occupy the entire rocket launch area, or you don’t—but there is absolutely no sense in these raids. They were not going to stop the rockets, yet soldiers can get killed. It is risk without

reward.”²⁸ However, the planned use of ground forces was in accordance with the new doctrine that minimized the use of ground forces.

The new language and terminology of Systemic Operational Design severely handicapped many commanders in the field. A large majority of the IDF officers did not grasp it. When the terminology made its way into at least one division’s operation orders, the brigade commanders were at a complete loss to understand them. Systemic Operational Design may not be without merit, but is useless if the officers attempting to carry out the operation orders cannot understand its terminology and methodology.²⁹

By 24 July, the IDF established over watch positions around Bint Jbeil, a large town north of Maroun al-Ras. Halutz ordered his forces to attack the town because the Hezbollah Secretary-General Nasrallah had delivered his well-known victory speech there after the 2000 Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. Halutz asserted that capturing the town would prove symbolic and “create a spectacle of victory.”³⁰ However, the battle for Bint Jbeil would have a great deal more effect on the Israeli public’s perception of the IDF’s professional judgment.³¹

The IDF’s new doctrine eliminated the corps formation and plans were in place to eliminate the division when the war erupted in 2006. Halutz reportedly did not see the need for a land formation larger than a brigade.³² Furthermore, Halutz did not understand how to properly employ ground forces.

When Halutz ordered the commander of the IDF northern forces, Lieutenant General Udi Adam, to attack Bint Jbeil, he ordered him to attack with just one battalion. Adam was infuriated with the idea of attacking such a large town without sufficient forces, but his protests were to no avail. On July 26, the battalion launched its attack. The battalion ran headlong into withering array of Hezbollah small arms, machine guns, rocket propelled grenades, anti-tank missiles,

mortars, and short range rockets. “An ambush from hell” is how one Israeli soldier described first contact.³³ Ultimately, Hezbollah fighters continued to occupy Bint Jbeil and the IDF never secured the entire town.

The lack of funding for the Israeli army in the years leading up to the war would have serious consequences. The Israeli Effects Based Operations emphasized airpower, so the ground forces were not a priority. Funding shortages would reduce the number of soldiers, reduce the quality of equipment and reduce the quality of training. The budgetary cuts to the ground forces stretched the IDF to the limit before the war and the continuing demands placed on them by the Palestinian uprising. Soldiers with perishable combat skills, such as tank crewman, patrolled the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In some cases, tank crewman went years without training on their armored vehicles.³⁴

The IDF made sizeable cuts to reserve ground forces and equipment. The army’s budget was decreased 13% and the reserve budget decreased by 25%.³⁵ Training of the reserve units had significantly decreased over the previous 6 years. Many IDF officers and reservists felt that the small unit and squad training were inadequate before and during the war. Most reserve units required a rushed week’s maneuver refresher training during the war to prepare for the attack into Lebanon.³⁶

Many high-ranking IDF officers, both regular and reserve, had not received adequate training in the years leading up to the war. Even brigade generals had not received adequate training and commanders above brigade level had not commanded their units in training for years.³⁷ The Israeli military doctrine did not see the need for ground formations above the brigade level, so the IDF was not prepared to conduct large-scale ground operations when it

became necessary. When the IDF had to conduct large-scale ground operations they performed poorly.

Hezbollah rockets continued to kill Israeli citizens throughout the war. While many within the IDF and the Israeli public remained perplexed over Hualatz's effects-based ground campaign of "raids" and "enter and pull out missions," retired Israeli politicians and seasoned IDF officers became increasingly alarmed. A former defense minister proposed an old-fashioned IDF assault plan to launch a blitzkrieg attack against Hezbollah, reach the strategically important Litani River in 48 hours and then demolish Hezbollah in six days.³⁸ The last time Israel successfully invaded Lebanon they used 100,000 boots on the ground. Israel had started this war with 10,000 boots on the ground boots on the ground and assumed that airpower and special operations forces would win the war.³⁹ There was a sharp contrast between how the IDF traditionally used ground forces and how they were used under the Effects Based Operations doctrine.

On 11 August, the United Nations Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1701, which implemented a cease-fire and end the war as soon as possible. Knowing full well that the war would be over in days and the old border reestablished, Olmert and Peretz made the decision to expand the war effort ordering their divisions north to the Litani. While the reasoning for the offensive maneuver remains unclear, its design was not to annihilate Hezbollah. It appeared that the IDF was still following Halutz's "raid" strategy, albeit this time with divisions instead of brigades. Senior officers stated that the operation design was a "Battle of Awareness against Hezbollah."⁴⁰ The divisions push to the north proved chaotic. The geography of the region forced the IDF to advance along predictable lines. This narrow area of

attack and the terrain provided Hezbollah time and cover to prepare ambushes for IDF troops. The ambushes resulted in lost armor and significant Israeli casualties.⁴¹

Israeli tank losses were much higher than expected. After the war, an Israeli officer stated, “There were many professional mistakes made in the use of tanks. The soldiers were not trained properly for this battle and the division lacked experience using tanks and infantry units together and in this type of terrain.”⁴² One of the battles revealed the failure of tank commanders and crewman to use their smokescreen systems, the lack of indirect-fire skills, and the total absence of combined arms skills.⁴³ After years of budget cuts to the Israeli ground forces, the IDF lost many of their perishable combat skills and they were no longer skilled at conducting conventional maneuver operations.

The failure to plan for alternatives to the initial reliance on airpower seems to have extended to delays in proper preparation for using ground forces after the war had begun. Although Israel watched Hezbollah build up on its northern border for six years, Israel’s overall quality in readiness, training, and preparation for a possible war seems to have been dictated by the fact it did not want to fight another land war in Lebanon, rather than the fact it might well have to fight such a war.⁴⁴

Hezbollah may not have defeated Israel on the battlefield, but it won the hearts and minds of many. Hezbollah’s narrative is that it survived the best Israel could throw at it, that only a few of its fighters were killed, that it stood up to Israel and was victorious. Despite the efforts of the Israeli military, Hezbollah became morally and politically stronger.⁴⁵ The attempt to use “effects” to force Hezbollah out of southern Lebanon and cause them to disarm failed. Immense air strikes against “symbolic” Lebanese targets and Hezbollah’s military resources and leadership did not cause Hezbollah to collapse as a military organization.

Israel miscalculated when it listed the four objectives for the war. The Israeli Prime Minister, Ehud Olmert, listed the following conditions for ending the fighting: return of the kidnapped soldiers, an unconditional cease-fire, deployment of the Lebanese army in the entire south of the country, and the ouster of Hezbollah from the south.⁴⁶

When Israeli Prime Minister Olmert defined the four objectives of the war, he may not have taken into full consideration the full implications of the goals he had chosen. By the time the war ended in August, Israel only achieved two of the objectives. Additionally, most of the stated goals were diplomatic and political in nature by requiring the cooperation of Hezbollah, the international community, and/or the Lebanese government. Israel placed into the hands of third parties, none of whom had any interest in an Israeli victory, the keys for creating the perception of a mission successfully accomplished. Ideally, Israel would have defined goals that were solely dependent on the actions of their own forces.⁴⁷

The Israeli politicians sowed the seeds for the political failure of the war by defining goals that were not solely dependent on the actions of their own forces. If the Israeli politicians had only defined goals that were dependent on the actions of their own forces, then it may have been possible to create the perception of a mission successfully accomplished. The blame for the political failures of the war rests entirely on the Israeli politicians who defined the goals.

After Israel withdrew from Lebanon in 2000, Hezbollah began preparations for a future war with Israel. Hezbollah was convinced that in any future war that Israel would rely heavily on air and artillery precision weapons while limiting its use of ground forces. Hezbollah was convinced that Israel would seek to limit the number of casualties and rely on standoff-based firepower. Hezbollah drew these conclusions from experiences with its first long war in Israel and they would prove to be crucial as Hezbollah began its operational and tactical planning.⁴⁸

One Israeli general stated, “Hezbollah had spent the years from 2000 to 2006 thinking about the coming war in tactical terms.”⁴⁹ Hezbollah had thought about how the IDF would fight and what types of weapons, personnel, and tactics the IDF would use. Hezbollah used this understanding to counter the Israeli Effects Based Operations doctrine.

At the tactical level, Hezbollah addressed the IDF's precision weapons capabilities by reducing its own weapon signature and target appearance time and then building hardened defensive positions. With the understanding that the IDF desired to “generate effects” on its systems,” Hezbollah “created a network of autonomous cells with little inter-cell systemic interaction.”⁵⁰ On the strategic level, Hezbollah also predicted that the Israeli's would attack with long-range precision weapons on its strategic centers of gravity. To counter this, Hezbollah simply did away with them so that there would be no critical strategic assets to attack.⁵¹

By the summer of 2006, Hezbollah was a well-trained, well-armed, highly motivated, and highly evolved warfighting machine. Hezbollah calculated accurately and designed an organizational and operational plan based on well-grounded assumptions. An Israeli Air Force campaign planning officer pointed out, “Hezbollah designed a war that in which Israel could only choose which soft underbelly to expose: the one whereby it avoids a ground operation and exposes its home front vulnerability, or the one whereby it enters Lebanon and sustains the loss of soldiers in on-going ground-based attrition with a guerilla organization. Hezbollah's brilliant trap apparently left Israel with two undesirable options.”⁵²

The key to defeating Israel required Hezbollah to modify its doctrine. By the early summer of 2006, Hezbollah transformed its original 13 principles of warfare (a doctrine that had worked brilliantly during the course of the Israeli occupation of Lebanon) into a new and unique design.⁵³ After the war, Hezbollah's Secretary General Nasrallah stated, “The resistance

withstood the attack and fought back. It didn't wage a guerrilla war either...it was not a regular army but was not a guerrilla in the traditional sense either. It was something in between. This is the new model.”⁵⁴

Hezbollah's “new model” combined both guerrilla and conventional methods, that some argued mirrored the approach used by the North Vietnamese and the Vietcong during their long war with the United States. One source suggested that, “Hezbollah leaders studied the Viet Cong as inspiration for establishing an advanced tunnel network, extending through the main avenues of approach into southern Lebanon.”⁵⁵

Hezbollah understood the IDF would use precision weapons as its main weapon. To counter this threat, Hezbollah prepared by dispersing its forces, building fortifications, and arming itself with the weapons needed to fight the war against Israel. These preparations would be the key to defeating Israel. Israel's Effects Based Operations doctrine made it made them very predictable and Hezbollah capitalized on this fact.

Hezbollah dispersed its fighters by organizing them into semiautonomous units of a few to several dozen fighters. According to Israeli intelligence, Hezbollah spread its bases out over 130 villages in southern Lebanon.⁵⁶ The dispersion of forces was to counter Israel's precision weapons capability, because the dispersion of forces would minimize the damage caused by each precision weapon.

Hezbollah fighters were capable of operating independently for long periods without direction from higher authority. Although an elaborate system of call radio signs, a closed cellular phone system, and two-way radios allowed these teams with higher units, a great deal of wartime decision making leeway was given to the junior ranks, largely mitigating the need for such communication.⁵⁷

The Hezbollah integrated its bases into otherwise normal civilian homes and structures. Hezbollah's military infrastructure was located around densely populated areas.⁵⁸ The civilians killed by Israel would cause tremendous political fallout. Israel shortened its war against Hezbollah due to intense international pressure precipitated by the destruction in Beirut and the harm caused to Lebanese civilians.⁵⁹

Hezbollah created an elaborate defensive network in its preparation to fight the Israeli military on the ground if an invasion took place. They created stockpiles of items needed to prosecute the war effort. The supplies were stored in well-fortified bunkers designed to withstand blistering IDF precision firepower. The most important command bunkers and weapons-arsenal bunkers dug deeply into Lebanon's rocky hills to depths of up to 40 meters. Nearly 600 separate ammunition and weapons bunkers were strategically located. Each Hezbollah militia unit received an assignment of three bunkers. One was a primary munitions bunker and the other two were reserve bunkers. Units were armed and tasked to fight within specific combat areas. Hezbollah built one position 20 meters from a United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon position and just 100 meters from an IDF position.⁶⁰

The villages and small cities along the border were used to great effect by Hezbollah forces. In Bint Jbeil, the narrow streets proved to be dangerous terrain for IDF armor. Hezbollah used ambushes and Improvised Explosive Devices against IDF tanks. In other villages along the border, Hezbollah took advantage of the upper floor of buildings to attack the IDF forces that were moving below in the narrow streets.⁶¹

Hezbollah's military arsenal before the 2006 war included offensive rockets and missiles of a wide variety and ranges, as well as other types of ordinance, including a significant and unexpected arsenal of modern missiles. These missiles included both anti-tank and anti-ship

missiles.⁶² Hezbollah's use of these weapons in the war shows they were well prepared to use them against Israel.

Israel knew that Hezbollah possessed antitank weapons, but they failed to understand the significance of the mass deployment of these weapons. Hezbollah created an innovative tactic by swarming Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM) with Rocket Propelled Grenades against Israeli tanks. Hezbollah mastered the art of light infantry/ATGM tactics against heavy mechanized forces. Anti-tank weapons caused most of the IDF casualties during the war.⁶³

Israeli intelligence estimates that Hezbollah fired more than 1,000 antitank missiles at Israeli tanks, vehicles and soldiers. The missiles struck 46 tanks and 14 other armored vehicles, penetrating the armor of 20, thus causing damage to more than 10 percent of the roughly 400 tanks that operated inside Lebanon during the conflict. At least 50 of the IDF's 118 fatalities were the result of antitank missile fire.⁶⁴

Hezbollah fired an Iranian-produced C-802 Noor guided anti-ship missile at an Israeli naval vessel during the naval blockage of Lebanon. The missile blasted a hole in the ship and killed four of its crew. An Israeli admiral later admitted that they were not aware that Hezbollah possessed this type of missile. Hezbollah was better prepared than Israel had presumed.⁶⁵

Hezbollah believed it would be critical to maintain a constant barrage of rockets on Israel when war erupted. They were prepared to aim for both civilian and military targets. The type of rockets Hezbollah had needed to be aimed at large targets, like villages and towns. This made civilian casualties inevitable.⁶⁶ The rocket barrages would force Israel to fight Hezbollah on the ground when air strikes did not stop them.

Most of the rockets that Hezbollah fired were short-range rockets. These rockets could easily be fired from virtually any position or building. Hezbollah had between 10,000 and

16,000 of these weapons.⁶⁷ From 12 July until 14 August, Hezbollah sustained a steady rate of rocket fire on Israeli territory in spite of IDF operations. Through the creation of a highly dispersed infrastructure, decentralized command and control, and a solid understanding of Israeli tactics, Hezbollah was able to continue operations under intense fire.⁶⁸

Hezbollah had several tactics to help increase the survivability of the rocket forces in the face of the IAF airpower. To limit the effect of the interdiction effort, Hezbollah maintained the majority of its rocket arsenal in theatre. In order to lower the heat signature of the rockets after firing, crews would cover the launchers with fire-retardant blankets after firing.⁶⁹

Hezbollah created rocket forces in preparation for its war with Israel, divided into 150 silos or “kill boxes.” Each of these silos were concealed and contained up to 10 launchers and were often fired by a timer. Land mines, surveillance sensors, and Hezbollah troops protected these silos.⁷⁰

For the first week and a half of the war, Hezbollah maintained a rate of fire of about 150 to 180 rockets a day. The rate dropped to about 100 strikes a day during the end of July and increased again during the beginning of August. Hezbollah’s success in maintaining a high rate of fire throughout the conflict is a testament to all the planning that took place before the war.⁷¹

Israeli police reports indicate that 4,228 rockets hit Israel during the 34 days of the war. The rocket attacks killed 53 civilians, damaged 2,000 homes, and led to the temporary evacuation of up to 1 million Israelis. The rocket attacks themselves were not extremely lethal, but Israel did suffer significant cumulative casualties and serious economic damage. The overall economic cost quickly rose to billions of dollars.⁷²

Hezbollah extensively mined the high-speed avenues of approach that Israel would logically have to use to invade southern Lebanon. One of the anti-tank mines destroyed an

Israeli tank on the first day of the war, which forced Israel to carry out its assault through the countryside rather than along the main roads. Some analysts believe this change in plans caused the Israeli ground assault to proceed much slower.⁷³

Hezbollah's fierce resistance surprised Israeli soldiers. "They're not fighting like we thought they would," one soldier said. "They're fighting harder. They're good on their own ground."⁷⁴ Hezbollah proved to be tactically proficient. Hezbollah was not simply staying in place and defending terrain. They were using small arms, rockets, and anti-tank weapons to successfully maneuver against the IDF.⁷⁵

Hezbollah's planning and preparations paid off for them. Israel was unable to stop the rocket attacks and they invaded Lebanon where the Hezbollah fighters were waiting in fortified and/or concealed positions. The estimated Hezbollah losses in killed, wounded, and captured were well under 15 percent of the initial force. Discussions with both Israeli and Arab experts also indicate that most Hezbollah casualties were part-time fighters and not the key cadres and that such losses may well have been offset by wartime recruiting of less experienced personnel.⁷⁶

Israel was unable to create a "consciousness of victory" for itself because it only achieved two of its four objectives. In addition, Israel never created a "cognitive perception of defeat" for Hezbollah despite the casualties and damage that was inflicted upon Lebanon.

The total number of Lebanese civilian casualties was around 1,100 killed and over 3,600 wounded. The number of homes destroyed was around 10,000 and 22,500 buildings were damaged. The overall damage to Lebanon's economy was between \$3 billion and \$5 billion. Outside of Israeli, Hezbollah's postwar survival and strength alongside Lebanon's seeming destruction drives observers to almost universal agreement that the 2006 war was illegally executed by Israel with meager if not counterproductive military justification and extreme

humanitarian effects.⁷⁷ The UN Commission of Inquiry cited a “significant pattern of excessive, indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force by IDF against Lebanese civilians and civilian objects,” concluding that Israel’s conduct demonstrated “an overall lack of respect for the cardinal principles regulating the conduct of armed conflict, most notably distinction, proportionality and precaution.”⁷⁸

The Effects Based Operations inspired doctrine created by the Israeli Defense Forces led to their failure in the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War because it is a fundamentally flawed concept and it enabled Hezbollah to prepare for an effects based operation campaign. The Effects Based Operations doctrine that Israel adopted relied too much on airpower and too little on ground maneuver forces. Hezbollah used its previous experiences fighting Israel to predict how Israel would fight a future war. As the Israeli military’s ground forces became weaker from 2000 to 2006, Hezbollah prepared to fight Israel on the ground in Lebanon.

Effects Based Operations proponents believed that precision firepower could make it possible to achieve strategic objectives without resorting to traditional ground operations. The Effects Based Operations-inspired doctrine that Israel adopted dismissed the use of traditional ground maneuver forces. Subsequently, the ground maneuver forces would become weakened because budget cuts would reduce the manpower, training, and equipment that they would need to be an effective fighting force.

Hezbollah understood that Israel would rely on airpower in any future conflict, so it prepared to counter this threat. Hezbollah countered the threat of airpower by dispersing its forces, creating hidden reinforced bunkers, pre-staging weapons and supplies, and by creating rocket forces. The Israeli air strikes would not be able to destroy Hezbollah. Hezbollah was able

to punish Israel with a continuous stream of rocket attacks. Israel conducted ground operations when it became clear that the air strikes could not destroy all of the rockets.

Hezbollah prepared for a ground war against Israel from 2000 to 2006. Hezbollah mined the high-speed avenues of approach that Israel would have to use to invade southern Lebanon and this caused the Israeli ground assault to proceed much slower. Israeli ground forces were surprised at how well Hezbollah fighters fought. Hezbollah mastered the art of light infantry/ATGM tactics against mechanized forces before the war. Israel understood Hezbollah possessed anti-tank weapons, but they failed to understand how Hezbollah would use these weapons. The anti-tank weapons would cause nearly half of the IDF casualties.

Israel received much criticism for the war because it was only able to achieve two of its four objectives, it inflicted a great deal of civilian casualties in Lebanon, and it did not decisively defeat Hezbollah. Hezbollah claimed a victory because it survived its war with relatively few casualties and it denied Israel a decisive victory. The Israeli-Hezbollah 2006 War showed how a non-state actor could win a strategic victory without winning a conventional military victory. In order to claim a strategic victory, Hezbollah did not need to defeat Israel militarily or politically. Rather, Hezbollah just needed to prevent Israel from achieving its military and political objectives.

Israel conducted an investigation after the war to determine why it failed to meet its military and political objectives. The changes that Israel made are reminiscent of the changes the U.S. military made after its invasion of Grenada in 1983. The invasion of Grenada showed the difficulty the service branches had in coordinating their efforts during war. The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Act of 1986 made sweeping changes to the U.S. military

doctrine that enhanced its ability to act as a joint force. These changes would prove worthy just a few years later in Operation JUST CAUSE and Operation DESERT STORM.

The IDF underwent an almost complete transformation by 2008. After examining the mistakes of the 2006 war with Hezbollah, the IDF abandoned the defective doctrine of the past and returned to the fundamentals of modern warfare. The new doctrine advocated that airpower and precision fires could only be decisive if used in conjunction with well trained and highly motivated combined arms ground maneuver forces. Airpower could not win a war by itself.⁷⁹

In 2008, Israel tested its new doctrine when it went to war with Hamas. Hamas attempted to replicate Hezbollah's tactics in its war against Israel. However, the Israeli military that Hamas fought in 2008 was not the same military that Hezbollah fought in 2006. Israel used coordinated air and ground attacks to inflict severe enemy casualties while suffering relatively few friendly casualties.⁸⁰ Israel learned from its mistakes and created new doctrine that worked much like the U.S. military did after Grenada. The 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War was Israel's Grenada.

Notes

¹ James N. Mattis, “USJFCOM Commander’s Guidance for Effects-based Operations,” *Parameters* (Autumn 2008): 18-25.

² David A. Deptula, *Effects-Based Operations: Change in the Nature of War*, (Arlington, Virginia: Aerospace Education Foundation, 2001), 5-12.

³ Deptula, 25.

⁴ Matt Matthews, *We Were Caught Unprepared: The 2006 Hezbollah-Israeli War*, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2008), 24.

⁵ *Ibid*, 62.

⁶ Milan N. Vego, “A Case Against Systemic Operational Design.” *Joint Forces Quarterly*, (2d Quarter 2009), 69-75.

⁷ Vego, 69.

⁸ Matthews, 24-25.

⁹ Vego, 73-75.

¹⁰ Matthews, 25.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 25.

¹² Avi Kober, “The Israeli Defense Forces in the Second Lebanon War: Why the Poor Performance?” *Journal of Strategic Studies*, (February 2008): 3-40.

¹³ Matthews, 26.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 36-37.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 37.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 37.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 37.

¹⁸ Anthony H. Cordesman, George Sullivan and William D. Sullivan, *Lessons of the 2006 Israeli-Hezbollah War*, (Washington, DC: Center for Strategic and International Studies, 2007), 121.

¹⁹ William M. Arkin, *Divining Victory: Airpower in the 2006 Israel-Hezbollah War*, (Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama: Air University Press, 2007) 116-118.

²⁰ Matthews, 37.

²¹ Ibid, 37.

²² Ibid, 38-39.

²³ Ibid, 38-39.

²⁴ Ibid, 45.

²⁵ Ibid, 45.

²⁶ Ibid, 36-37.

²⁷ Ibid, 62.

²⁸ Ibid, 43.

²⁹ Ibid, 63-64.

³⁰ Ibid, 45.

³¹ Ibid, 45.

³² Ibid, 28.

³³ Ibid, 47.

³⁴ Ibid, 63.

³⁵ Cordesman, 96.

³⁶ Ibid, 91.

³⁷ Matthews, 27-29.

³⁸ Ibid, 50-51.

³⁹ Cordesman, 90.

⁴⁰ Matthews, 51-52.

⁴¹ Cordesman, 85.

⁴² Matthews, 55.

⁴³ Ibid, 63.

⁴⁴ Cordesman, 90.

⁴⁵ Arkin, xxiv.

⁴⁶ Amos Harel and Avi Issacharoff, *34 Days: Israel, Hezbollah, and the War in Lebanon*, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 108.

⁴⁷ Scott Farquhar, *Back to Basics: A Study of the Second Lebanon War and Operation CAST LEAD*, (Fort Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute Press, U.S. Army Combined Arms Center, 2009), 117.

⁴⁸ Matthews, 17.

⁴⁹ Cordesman, 85.

⁵⁰ Matthews, 21.

⁵¹ Ibid, 21.

⁵² Ibid, 21.

⁵³ Ibid, 20-21.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 22.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 22.

⁵⁶ Arkin, 24-25.

⁵⁷ Cordesman, 81.

⁵⁸ Arkin, 28.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 111.

⁶⁰ Cordesman, 138.

⁶¹ Ibid, 137.

⁶² Arkin, 24-26.

⁶³ Cordesman, 109-111.

⁶⁴ Arkin, 61-62.

⁶⁵ Matthews, 38.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 18.

⁶⁷ Cordesman, 100.

⁶⁸ Arkin, 55.

⁶⁹ Cordesman, 105.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 135.

⁷¹ Ibid, 102.

⁷² Ibid, 103.

⁷³ Ibid, 47.

⁷⁴ Matthews, 44.

⁷⁵ Ibid, 44.

⁷⁶ Cordesman, 17.

⁷⁷ Arkin, 148.

⁷⁸ Ibid, 149.

⁷⁹ Farquhar, 24.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 34-35.

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